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United Nations Forum on Forests
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Item 4 (e) of the provisional agenda*
Common items for each session

Intersessional work, including further discussion concerning the ad hoc expert groups

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

In its decision 2/2, the United Nations Forum on Forests decided to further discuss at its third session the titles, composition, terms of reference, scheduling and reporting of the ad hoc expert groups based on the bracketed draft negotiating text contained in the decision. The annex to the present note contains a reproduction of that text to facilitate the discussion of the Forum.

* E/CN.18/2003/1.

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1. At its second session, the United Nations Forum on Forests convened informal consultations on the three ad hoc working groups proposed in the multi-year programme of work which it adopted in its resolution 1/1. The groups are intended to support the work of the Forum on the following key issues: (a) approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting; (b) finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies; and (c) consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests.

2. The consultations addressed the following points for each ad hoc expert group: (a) scope and work programme; (b) tasks; (c) composition and participation; (d) travel assistance; (e) officers; (f) duration of work; (g) meetings; (h) proposals and recommendations for consideration by the Forum; (i) reports; and (j) secretariat. Since agreement was not reached on all points, the entire text was bracketed and annexed to decision 2/2 of the Forum, in which it decided to discuss the matter further at its third session.

3. The Forum may wish to further discuss the issue of establishing the ad hoc expert groups based on the bracketed text annexed to its decision 2/2, which is reproduced in the annex.

Annex*

[A

Ad hoc expert group on approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting

Scope and work programme

1. The ad hoc expert group shall provide scientific and technical advice to the United Nations Forum on Forests on approaches and mechanisms for the work of the Forum on monitoring, assessment and reporting. Its work should be undertaken within the context of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35 and relevant resolutions of the Forum at its first and second sessions, and should also consider, inter alia, related Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) proposals for action and the outcomes of Forum sessions, including its reports.

Tasks

2. For monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress in implementing IPF/IFF proposals for action and progress towards sustainable forest management, the expert group will:

(a) Assess existing reporting requirements under relevant international conventions, processes, instruments and organizations in order to identify strengths, weaknesses and duplication in reporting processes, taking into account the relevant work undertaken by Collaborative Partnership on Forests members;

(b) Assess existing monitoring and assessment procedures in international conventions, processes, instruments and organizations related to forests in order to identify strengths, weaknesses and duplications, taking into account the relevant work undertaken by Collaborative Partnership on Forests members;

(c) Propose ways for the Forum to monitor and assess progress, based on:

(i) Voluntary reporting by countries on implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action;

(ii) Voluntary reporting by Collaborative Partnership on Forests members and other relevant organizations, international and regional processes on implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action;

(iii) Ongoing work on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management being undertaken at the national, regional and international levels;

(iv) Existing data and information as well as reporting systems and structures;

(d) Propose an outline for voluntary reporting to the Forum;

(e) Recommend options for drawing upon the reports provided to Forum sessions to identify trends and lessons learned;

* Reproduction of document E/2002/42, chap. II, sect. C, decision 2/2, annex.

(f) Develop recommendations on how to build capacity in countries for monitoring, assessment and reporting, taking into account the special needs of developing countries.

3. In carrying out these tasks, the group should take into account the results of intersessional activities related to monitoring, assessment and reporting led by countries, organizations, international and regional processes. Its reports should be made available as a contribution to the discussions at Forum country- and organization-led initiatives that are related to the present terms of reference. As relevant, the expert group should also take into account the results of the work undertaken by Collaborative Partnership on Forests members on forest-related concepts, terminology and definitions.

Composition and participation

4. The expert group shall be composed of 30 experts designated by Governments, six from each of the five United Nations regional groups.

5. The government-designated experts shall have well recognized scientific and technical expertise in monitoring, assessment and reporting and knowledge of the intergovernmental forest policy deliberations of IPF, IFF and the Forum.

6. Experts from the United Nations Member States and member States of its specialized agencies shall be allowed to participate in the first [two]/[three] days of the meetings of the expert group. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests shall be invited to make scientific and technical contributions to the work of the expert group and participate in the first [two]/[three] days of the meetings [and remain as observers for the last [three]/[two] days of the meetings].

7. Intergovernmental organizations and representatives of major groups, with relevant expertise, may participate in the first [two]/[three] days of the meetings, [in the activities of the ad hoc expert group as observers]/[and remain as observers for the last [three]/[two] days of the meetings], in accordance with the rules and procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, as well as practices established by the Commission on Sustainable Development, IPF and IFF. They will be invited to make scientific and technical contributions.

Travel assistance

8. Travel support and daily subsistence allowance at established United Nations rates will be provided to each of the government-designated experts, if the budget allows, with priority to developing countries, particularly least developed countries.

Officers

9. The Chairmanship of the expert group shall be elected from among the government-designated experts at its first meeting.

Duration of work

10. The expert group shall initiate its work immediately after the second session of the Forum and complete its work at least three months in advance of its fourth session. (*Pending agreement on the section on reports*)

Meetings

11. The expert group will hold up to two meetings for up to five days each. It will also use electronic means of communication to the greatest extent possible. The ad hoc expert group meetings will be organized at United Nations venues where meeting facilities are available, taking into account cost-effectiveness.

Proposals and recommendations for consideration by the Forum

12. The proposals and recommendations of the expert group should be provided by consensus. In the absence of consensus, the reports of the expert group shall fully reflect the diversity of views expressed.

Reports

13. The expert group shall prepare its reports, taking into consideration the views of all participants and contributions received, and shall submit its reports to the Forum for consideration. The expert group shall submit [an interim report to the Forum at its third session and] a final report for submission to the Forum at its [fourth]/[third] session. The reports shall specify major outcomes of the expert group's work, including proposals and recommendations for further consideration by the Forum. (*Suggestion made to add reference to tasks in this section; this section to be dealt with in conjunction with the section on duration of work*)

Secretariat

14. The Forum secretariat shall serve as the secretariat for the expert group, supported by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

B
Ad hoc expert group on finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies

Scope and work programme

1. The ad hoc expert group shall provide scientific and technical advice to the Forum for its work on finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies. The work of the expert group should be undertaken within the context of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35 and relevant resolutions adopted by the Forum at its first and second sessions, and should also consider, inter alia, related IPF/IFF proposals for action and outcomes of Forum sessions, including its reports.

Tasks

2. The expert group will undertake the following specific tasks [[in the year 2003]/[in the years 2002-2003]]:

Finance

(a) Consider previous initiatives on finance, including recommendations from the Croydon, Oslo and Pretoria workshops, as well as the relevant IPF/IFF proposals for action, background papers and strategy documents of Collaborative Partnership on Forests members;

(b) Assess the role and status of official development assistance (ODA) directed towards sustainable forest management and consider ways for enhancing its availability and effectiveness. In this regard, identify possible means to enhance developed countries efforts to fulfil their commitments on ODA;

(*Proposal made to move task (c) to after what is currently task (e)*)

(c) Assess country experiences towards mobilization of financial resources to support sustainable forest management. In this regard, identify gaps, potentials and limitations of current financing sources and financial mechanisms to implement sustainable forest management. Further, propose approaches to enhance and more effectively use and mobilize national and international financial resources;

(d) Assess and consider the role of the private sector in financing sustainable forest management. In this regard, recommend measures to improve the enabling environment for private investment in sustainable forest management, at both the national and international levels, and encourage increased private resource flows to the forest sector, in particular in developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

(*Proposal made to move task (e) to after what is currently task (f)*)

(e) Review the effectiveness of existing international financing for sustainable forest management, including methods and mechanisms, analyse opportunities, country-level gaps, limitations and donor and recipient priorities, as well as the contribution of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests towards financing sustainable forest management. Propose measures to improve the effectiveness of that financing to enhancing the enabling environment at both the national and international levels [and to attract increased financing from all sources] [, including new and additional funds];

(*Proposal made to move task (f) to after task (b)*)

(f) Explore the potential of new and innovative approaches to attract increased financing for sustainable forest management. Discuss and make suggestions for expanded use of those approaches to address the need for financial resources for financing sustainable forest management, including through national forest programmes or equivalent processes;

[(f) bis Propose ways to increase resources to support capacity-building in countries to improve monitoring, assessment and reporting]. (*This task is linked to task (f) of the expert group on approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessing and reporting*)

3. The ad hoc expert group will undertake the following specific tasks [[in the year 2003]/[in the years 2003-2004]]:

Transfer of environmentally sound technologies

(a) Review and assess existing initiatives on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and knowledge diffusion for the promotion of sustainable forest management among countries and sectors and stakeholders, including through North-South, North-North and South-South cooperation and programmes of Collaborative Partnership on Forests members. This should include an analysis of incentives that promote and obstacles that inhibit the transfer of forest-related

environmentally sound technologies between and/or within countries, in particular to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in both the private and public sectors;

(b) Recommend approaches to improve transfer of forest-related environmentally sound technologies. The recommendation may include the role of various policy instruments, such as concessional and preferential terms, public-private partnerships and research cooperation, as well as capacity-building in the use and application of current and emerging environmentally sound technologies, including remote sensing.

Composition and participation

4. The expert group shall consist of [a facilitation group, composed of] [25] experts nominated by Governments, five from each of the five United Nations regional groups[, based on the principle of equitable geographical representation].

5. The government-designated experts shall have well recognized scientific and technical expertise in finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies and knowledge of the intergovernmental forest policy deliberations of IPF, IFF and the Forum.

6. The expert group shall be open-ended, which includes participation of other members of the United Nations and members of its specialized agencies. [Up to eight] Representatives of the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests [and [four] representatives of major groups] shall be invited to provide substantive and technical support to the expert group.

[6 bis The intergovernmental organizations and accredited major groups may participate in the activities of the ad hoc expert group as observers, in accordance with United Nations rules and procedures, as well as its established practice.]

Travel assistance

7. Travel support and daily subsistence allowance at established United Nations rates will be provided to each of the government-designated experts [from the 25 States as mentioned above] [with priority to developing countries, particularly least developed countries].

Officers

8. The Chairmanship of the expert group shall be elected from among the government-designated experts at its first meeting.

Duration of work

9. The expert group shall initiate its work immediately after the second session of the Forum and complete its work at least three months in advance of its fourth session.

Meetings

10. The expert group will hold up to two meetings for up to five days each. It will also use electronic means of communication, to the greatest extent possible. The

expert group meetings will be organized at United Nations venues where meeting facilities are available, taking into account cost-effectiveness.

Proposals and recommendations for consideration by the Forum

11. The proposals and recommendations of the expert group should be provided by consensus. In the absence of consensus, the reports of the expert group shall fully reflect the diversity of views expressed.

Reports

12. The expert group shall adopt a progress report at its first meeting, for submission to the Forum at its third session, and a final report at its second meeting, for submission to the Forum at its fourth session. The reports shall specify major outcomes of the expert group's work, including proposals and recommendations for further consideration by the Forum.

Secretariat

13. The Forum secretariat shall serve as the secretariat for the expert group, supported by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

C
Ad hoc expert group on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests

Scope and work programme

1. The ad hoc expert group shall provide scientific and technical advice to the Forum for its work on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests. The work of the expert group should be undertaken within the context of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35 and resolutions adopted by the Forum at its first and second sessions, in particular those referring to the creation and scope of the ad hoc expert groups.

Tasks

2. [The expert group will undertake the following specific tasks in the year 2003:] assess existing regional and international binding and non-binding instruments and processes relevant to forests; the assessment should include analysis of complementarities, gaps and duplications, and should take into account Forum resolution 2/3 on the specific criteria for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests.

3. [The expert group will undertake the following specific tasks in the year 2004:]

(a) Consider reports prepared by countries, Collaborative Partnership on Forests members and the Forum secretariat, and outcomes of Forum sessions;

(b) Consider other outcomes of the international arrangement on forests, including countries' efforts to implement the IPF/IFF proposals for action, other expert groups, Forum country- and organization-led initiatives and previous relevant

initiatives, and forest-related work undertaken by the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests;

(c) Review the relevant experiences of existing forest-related organizations and agreements, including multilateral environmental agreements and regional conventions and processes, focusing on complementarities, gaps and duplications.

Composition and participation

4. [The expert group shall be composed of experts from all Members of the United Nations and member States of its specialized agencies]/[The ad hoc expert group shall be composed of 30 experts designated by Governments, six from each of the five United Nations regional groups].

5. The government-designated experts shall have well recognized scientific and technical expertise on the forest regime, United Nations Conference on Environment and Development conventions and knowledge of the intergovernmental forest policy deliberations of IPF, IFF and the Forum.

6. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests shall be invited to make scientific and technical contributions to the work of the expert group and participate in the first [two]/[three] days of the meetings [and remain as observers for the last [three]/[two] days of the meetings].

7. Intergovernmental organizations and representatives of major groups, with relevant expertise, may participate in the first [two]/[three] days of the meetings [in the activities of the ad hoc expert group as observers]/[and remain as observers for the last [three]/[two] days of the meetings], in accordance with the rules and procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, as well as practices established by the Commission on Sustainable Development, IPF and IFF. They will be invited to make scientific and technical contributions.

Travel assistance

8. Travel support and daily subsistence allowance at established United Nations rates will be provided to each of the government-designated experts [from the 25 States as mentioned above] [with priority to developing countries, particularly least developed countries].

Officers

9. The two Co-Chairpersons of the expert group shall be elected from among the government-designated experts at its first meeting[, one from a developing country and one from a developed country, taking into account the contribution of countries to the IPF/IFF and UNFF process].

Duration of work

10. The expert group shall initiate its work immediately after the [third]/[fourth] session of the Forum [, provide an interim report to the fourth session of the Forum for its information] and complete its work at least three months in advance of the fifth session of the Forum.

Meetings

11. The expert group will hold up to two meetings for up to five days each. It will also use electronic means of communication to the greatest extent possible. The expert group meetings will be organized at United Nations venues where meeting facilities are available, taking into account cost-effectiveness.

Proposals and recommendations for consideration by the Forum

12. The proposals and recommendations of the expert group should be provided by consensus. In the absence of consensus, the reports of the expert group shall fully reflect the diversity of views expressed.

Reports

13. The expert group shall adopt a progress report at its first meeting, for submission to the Forum at its fourth session, and a final report at its second meeting, for submission to the Forum at its fifth session. The reports shall specify major outcomes of the expert group's work, including proposals and recommendations for further consideration by the Forum. (*This section to be dealt with in conjunction with the section on the duration of work*)

Secretariat

14. The Forum secretariat shall serve as the secretariat for the ad hoc expert group, supported by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.]